

Rising powers in stormy seas: Brazil and the UNIFIL maritime task force

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ABSTRACT

In February 2011, after five years of NATO powers rotating at the helm of UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force, its command was handed over to Brazil. What factors have motivated Brazil's participation, especially in light of the geographic distances separating Brazil and Lebanon and deepening crisis in Brazil? This article analyses Brazil's engagement with UNIFIL in light of key foreign policy and defence priorities and identifies three key motivations: the aspiration to participate more directly in Middle East security issues; the historical and political ties between Brazil and Lebanon; and the chance to expand Brazil's naval capacity in accordance with its new naval defence strategy within the South Atlantic. More recently, however, economic slowdown and political turbulence domestically have created new challenges for Brazil's ability to maintain its contributions to UN peacekeeping. These shifts offer an opportunity to refine the use of the 'rising powers' concept in the study of international security.

Introduction

Over the past few years, scholarship on international security has debated the growing role of rising powers in international peacebuilding and peacekeeping, noting a considerable intensification of such efforts in the post-cold war.¹ Following the terrestrial focus of most UN peacekeeping missions, the contributions of rising powers have concentrated on land-based troop deployments. However, Brazil's 2010 decision to accept the helm of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)'s Maritime Task Force (MTF) – the first such force to be integrated into a UN peacekeeping mission – suggests that rising powers are also expanding their role in international security by participating in (and helping to shape) the naval components of UN peacekeeping. Nonetheless, these contributions are not without challenges: in the case of Brazil, a deepening scenario of economic and political crisis on the domestic front has generated new constraints on Brazilian commitments abroad, not only reducing the resources available but also casting into doubt the country's status as a rising power.

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¹Richmond and Tellidis, *The BRICS*.

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Brazil's engagement in Lebanon poses a dilemma of continuity for Brazilian contributions to UN peacekeeping. Historically, Brazil's participation in such missions has focused on the geographic regions prioritized by its foreign policy; aside from deployments of personnel to missions in Timor-Leste, Brazil's contributions have taken place primarily in Latin America and Africa. Since the mid-2000s, Brazil's most visible roles have been in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO). In these missions, Brazil has deployed troops and police officers to work on the imposition of force primarily in urban areas (Haiti) and rural zones (Eastern Congo). In 2010, when the UN and the Lebanese Government requested that Brazil assume the leadership of the UNIFIL MTF – whose main stated goal is the prevention of sea-borne contraband of arms into Lebanon – Brazilian decision-makers perceived a series of opportunities, as well as new risks. Considering Lebanon's location and the difficulties involved in deploying warships to a distant and highly unstable region, what accounts for Brazil's decision to participate in UNIFIL, and are its main motivations sufficient to keep sailing in these stormy waters? How has the unfolding crisis in Brazil affected this commitment, and what are the implications for the country's rising power status in international security?

Combining official documents – especially from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Brazilian Government and Armed Forces – with interviews carried out with Brazilian officials, the article explores the key motivations behind the decision to participate in UNIFIL. The analysis indicates that three key factors helped to motivate Brazil's joining the mission: the aspiration to participate more directly in Middle East security issues; the historical ties between Brazil and Lebanon; and the chance to expand Brazil's naval capacity in accordance with its new defence strategy within the South Atlantic. However, after quietly intensifying its role in UNIFIL, Brazil has experienced economic slowdown and political turbulence on the domestic front. The context of crisis creates new challenges for Brazil's ability to maintain its contributions to UN peacekeeping, precisely at a time when its chief mission, MINUSTAH, is undergoing troop reductions. More broadly, these shifts offer an opportunity to refine the concept of 'rising power' in the study of international security.

The article is structured around two key sections. The next part considers the recent literature on rising powers and international security, focusing on UN peacekeeping (including its naval components) and providing some background on Brazil's contributions to UN peace operations. The second section explores the factors behind Brazil's decision to lead the UNIFIL MTF against the backdrop of Brazil's foreign policy and defence priorities and its changing domestic context. The conclusion examines the implications for this case for

the study of rising powers in international security and notes some directions for future research.

Rising powers and peace operations

In the post-cold war era, the landscape of peace operations – a category encompassing both peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions – has changed considerably. In addition to the expanding number and size of UN missions,² important qualitative changes are afoot. Intra-state violence has proliferated, with complex conflicts involving ever-changing constellations of actors, and Chapter VII missions have become more common. Such missions, convened when order has collapsed within states, reflect a greater willingness by the international community, especially by the USA and its allies, to intervene militarily in areas of high instability – although such intervention is carried out in highly selective fashion. As a result, new tensions have arisen between the Westphalian logic that underpinned the original design of the UN security apparatus and, on the other hand, the increasingly intra-state dynamics of contemporary conflicts.

According to Duffield, post-cold war international security has been dominated by discourses in which threats are reframed and expanded in the pursuit of a ‘liberal peace’.³ The changing nature of liberal interventionism, especially since the start of the ‘War on Terror’ and its institutionalization within the UN through Resolutions 1368 and 1372, has generated new contradictions at the intersection of security and development.⁴ In particular, underdevelopment is increasingly viewed as an important cause of instability and conflict – and, from the perspective of global powers, as a potential source of radicalism and terrorism. This expanded definition of security threat has been used to justify intervention in the name of humanitarianism, particularly in spaces deemed ‘fragile’ or ‘failed’, ‘disordered’ or ‘ungoverned’. Intervention is thereby recast as a way to induce the institutional, political and social changes that are assumed to be necessary to overcome recurring conflict. In the Middle East, this broadened security agenda has become particularly problematic because the War on Terror makes Middle Eastern and Arab countries and populations into key targets.

However, the turn to liberalism has not gone unchallenged. Among other actors, some rising powers – states that possess a degree of influence in their respective regions but that also hold global aspirations, including with respect

²In 1994, UN peacekeeping involved around 80,000 military personnel; by 2014, 16 ongoing UN peacekeeping missions counted on 104,000 uniformed personnel (troops, police and military observers), 17,000 civilians and 1,800 UN volunteers.

³Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War*.

⁴Buzan, ‘Will the “Global War on Terrorism”’.

to reform of current global governance⁵ – increasingly contest the emerging intervention norms. In the past few years, for instance, the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have become especially critical of what they perceive as heavy-handed military interventionism by Western powers, and they have defended stronger versions of the principle of national sovereignty in multilateral fora like the United Nations. This questioning has intensified as the roles of global powers and rising powers shift in peace operations, with the USA and its allies experiencing a relative decline while rising powers acquire greater visibility and influence in what is arguably a transition towards a more multipolar system.⁶

However, the concept of rising power has also been challenged, for instance with respect to states' ability to leverage economic growth into influence abroad, especially when that growth oscillates significantly.⁷ In the past few years, for instance, economic downturns in some of the BRICS countries have prompted analysts to question the label rising power altogether, with some critics arguing that states like Brazil experienced a short-lived (and ill-fated) burst in growth rather than a sustained expansion with systemic impact.⁸ These criticisms tend to underscore the unidirectionality of the term 'rising power', which may lead to overly optimistic assessments of these states' impact on the international order, whether individually or through coalitions like the BRICS.

These challenges are also relevant to the role of these rising powers within international security, including in peace operations. Even as they have become more active in regional security initiatives, these states' roles within the UN system have also changed. Many have increased their personnel contributions to UN missions despite promoting discourses of respect for national sovereignty (although interests, capacity and levels of engagement vary widely among these states).⁹ While participation in UN peacekeeping does not constitute a power projection strategy *per se*, it is an important component of some states' rising power approach, especially its soft power component.¹⁰

⁵While the term rising power is debated by international relations theorists, here we detract from the realist assumption that emerging powers rely on military and economic capabilities, and draw upon the English School view of great powerhood as more than simply capability. These states typically have ambitions to alter the global system so as to open up more space for themselves, and secondarily to make the system more representative of the current power landscape. See Bull, *The Anarchical Society*; Hurrell, 'Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order'; Narlikar, 'New Powers in the Club'; and Hart and Jones, 'How Do Rising Powers Rise?'

⁶Wiharta et al., *The New Geopolitics*.

⁷Tank, *The Concept of Rising Powers*.

⁸In 2009, *The Economist* ran a cover depicting the statue of Christ sitting atop Rio de Janeiro taking off, rocket-like, under the headline 'Brazil Takes Off'. Four years later, the magazine published a nearly identical cover, but with the statue spinning out of control ('Has Brazil Blown It?'). See the cover stories in *The Economist* issues 12 Nov. 2009 and 8 Sept. 2013.

⁹De Carvalho and de Coning, *Rising Powers*.

¹⁰Senior diplomats frequently refer to Brazil's UN peacekeeping commitments as evidence of the country's credentials in seeking an enhanced role in international security, for instance in its bid to obtain a permanent seat at the UN Security Council. Comments made under the Chatham House rule at the

As others have noted, participation in UN peacekeeping is driven by a gamut of motivations that range across several arenas: political, economic, security, institutional and normative concerns, but a general distinction can be made between a state's general disposition to contribute and the choice to participate in a particular mission, which depends on more specific policies and decision-making moments.¹¹ Furthermore, these are dynamic choices: as in other areas of international affairs, contributions to UN peacekeeping missions are subject to unforeseen financial and political constraints, both domestically and abroad.

Naval peacekeeping and UNIFIL

The ability of a state to sustain its contributions to UN peace operations even during times of domestic crisis is relevant not only for land-based efforts, but also (and increasingly) for sea-based components of peace operations. Both within and outside the UN, international relations actors and scholars have begun paying greater attention to maritime security issues; as Bueger has noted, 'maritime security is one of the latest buzzwords of international relations.'¹² The renewed salience of the maritime domain, in which old issues such as piracy are reframed as 'new threats', is associated with the proliferation of seaborne international trade, but also relates to the growing use of sea routes for illicit activities like drug and human trafficking, piracy and terrorist activities.

UN peacekeeping has historically focused on terrestrial spaces, relying on the deployment of ground troops, police forces and civilians to urban or rural areas. Some UN missions, however, have involved naval components in support of land operations, especially the transport of personnel, supplies and equipment.¹³ The first United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), launched in 1957 to end the Suez Crisis, included attempts to secure shipping lines and prevent arms contraband.¹⁴ Yet, until recently, such naval elements were employed as *ad hoc* support structures rather than as central parts of the peacekeeping mission.

'Dialogue on the UN Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions' (Diálogo sobre a Revisão das Operações de Manutenção da Paz e das Missões Políticas Especiais das Nações Unidas), Brasília, Jan. 2015.

¹¹Bellamy and Williams, *Broadening the Base*; Daniel et al., *Peace Operations*.

¹²Bueger, 'What Is Maritime Security?', p. 1

¹³Oliveira, 'Naval Peacekeeping and Piracy'. Oliveira lists the following as the main UN peacekeeping missions with support naval components: Palestine (1947–48); Korea (1950–53); Egypt (1956–57); Congo (1960–64); West New Guinea (1962–63); Cyprus (1964); Mozambique–Rhodesia (1965–75); Persian Gulf (1990–91); Gulf of Fonseca (1990–92); Cambodia (1992–94); Somalia (1992–95); Adriatic Sea (1992–96); Haiti (1993–94); Albania (1997); East Timor (1999–2002); and Lebanon (2006 to the present). MINUSTAH acquired a naval component starting in 2008, with Uruguay's contribution through URUMAR, tasked with patrolling the territorial waters in collaboration with the Haitian Coast Guard.

¹⁴UN, 'Middle East – UNEF I'.

In the first half of the 1990s, with the expansion of second and third peacekeeping generations, these naval components increasingly focused on identifying maritime 'unconventional security problems' (that is, non-military threats) and carrying out low-intensity operations. At the same time, the post-cold war period opened up new opportunities for multilateral cooperation at sea, including with respect to conflict prevention. Oliveira argues that anti-piracy efforts near the Horn of Africa, which began in 2008, were a landmark for naval peacekeeping, because the initiative provoked new thinking about naval peacekeeping as a semi-autonomous realm with its own logic, rather than simply an extension of land-based peacekeeping.¹⁵ Combined Task Force 150, for instance – a multinational naval coalition operating in the Horn of Africa region – has counted on contributions from 18 countries to combat piracy and carry out interdictions off the Somali coast, in parallel to other anti-piracy operations by China, Iran, India and Russia.¹⁶ These changing configurations of naval cooperation and their role in the prevention and management of conflict have prompted a small but growing literature on the naval components of peacekeeping.¹⁷

Naval peacekeeping has also become more salient with the creation of the first Maritime Task Force as part of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, the UNIFIL MTF. UNIFIL was originally established in 1978, during the Lebanese civil war, following an Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon that was designed to clear out Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and allied bases from the area south of the Litani River. UNSC resolutions 425 and 426 tasked the mission with confirming the withdrawal of Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) from southern Lebanon, restoring peace and security and assisting the Lebanese Government in reclaiming effective authority over the region.¹⁸ From its onset, this mandate and its implementation generated controversy; Murphy argues that UNIFIL's mandate (and its general effectiveness) were undermined by inadequate UNSC support.

The UNIFIL terrestrial area of operations is currently defined by the Litani River in the north and the Blue Line in the south; the latter refers to the line of withdrawal that was identified in 2000 by the UN, in cooperation with Lebanese and Israeli officials. The mission's mandate is renewed on an annual basis, and over time its scope has been readjusted. As Zwitter notes, these

¹⁵The efforts began after a series of UN Security Council resolutions authorized all states and regional organizations with necessary capacity to deploy warship and military aircraft in Somali territorial water to repress piracy and armed robbery at sea. Japan, China, Russia, India, Malaysia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Yemen, as well as three coalitions led by the USA, the EU and NATO have carried out naval operations.

¹⁶Countries presently contributing to CTF-150 include Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. Other nations who have participated include Australia, Italy, India, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Thailand and Turkey.

¹⁷See Staley, *The Wave of the Future*; McLaughlin, *United Nations Naval Peace Operations*; Wirtz and Larsen, *Naval Peacekeeping*.

¹⁸UN, 'Resolution 425 (1978)', S/RES/425; and UN Security Council, 'Resolution 426', S/RES/426.

alterations resulted not only from shifting circumstances (including the engagement of Hezbollah, a non-state actor, in the conflict), but also from changing thinking about peacekeeping within the UN – namely the adoption of multi-dimensional approaches to peace and security.¹⁹ As a result, UNIFIL underwent significant changes once peace operations were already in place, with its original mandate expanded not only to enhance military capacity but also to encompass non-core military goals.²⁰ Despite these adjustments, tensions persisted between Israel and Hezbollah, and war broke out again in 2006, with an estimated 1,200 Lebanese (mostly civilians) and 160 Israelis (mostly soldiers) killed.²¹ Makdisi argues that the US-led ‘War on Terror’ gave the 2006 Lebanese war a new, global meaning, reframing the conflict not as a local dispute but rather as part of a broader geopolitical struggle in which the USA, rather than local actors, was the protagonist, and where the elimination of Hezbollah by Israel was viewed as crucial to global anti-terrorist efforts.²²

UN Security Council Resolution 1701, approved on 11 August 2006, tasked the mission with monitoring the cessation of hostilities; accompanying and supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in southern Lebanon; expanding its humanitarian assistance efforts and assisting in the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons; and helping the LAF to establish an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons (other than those of the Lebanese Government and UNIFIL) between the Blue Line and the Litani River.²³ As a result, UNIFIL and the UN Office for the Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) took on more humanitarian tasks such as provision of free medical, dental, veterinary and other forms of assistance to the local population, as well as capacity-building programmes in computer science, language and sports, among others. After the war, the Lebanese Government decided to deploy 15,000 LAF troops in South Lebanon, including within UNIFIL’s area of operations, leading to an intensification of cooperation between UNIFIL and LAF.

The effectiveness of UNIFIL since 2006 has been hotly debated. Some analysts consider UNIFIL (along with the deterrence between Israel and Hezbollah) to be a factor behind the recent stability in southern Lebanon yet criticize the mission for relying on tacit agreements with Hezbollah and for carrying

¹⁹Zwitter, ‘Hybridization of Peacekeeping’.

²⁰The first significant mandate revisions followed the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, when Israeli forces reached and surrounded Beirut. For the next three years, UNIFIL stayed behind the Israeli lines, and its role was limited to providing protection and humanitarian assistance to the local population. The second occasion was the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, in June 2000, after a 22-year long occupation. In its aftermath, UNIFIL’s area of operation remained generally quiet, except for occasional minor violations of the Blue Line and breaches of the cease-fire. Nonetheless, in a July 2000 report, the UN Secretary-General warned that the potential for recurring instability still existed. See UNSC, *Report of the Secretary-General*.

²¹AP, ‘Lebanon Sees More than 1000 War Deaths’, 28 Dec. 2006, and Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Israel-Hizbullah Conflict’.

²²Makdisi, ‘Constructing Security Council Resolution’.

²³UNSC, *Resolution 1701*.

out limited cooperation with LAF (only 10 per cent of the peacekeepers' patrols are conducted jointly with Lebanese troops).²⁴ Murphy notes that peace in southern Lebanon remains fragile, and that that protecting civilians under imminent threat of physical violence is not possible within the context of armed hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.²⁵

Although the hostilities in 2006 were primarily land-based, Israel imposed an air, land and sea blockade on Lebanon. The blockade's impact on the Lebanese economy – whose primary energy requirements are almost exclusively imported and arrive by sea²⁶ – was characterized as 'humiliating' by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.²⁷ The manoeuvre prompted the Lebanese Government to ask for assistance from the UN in securing Lebanon's maritime border and entry points. In his request letter, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora made it clear that what was needed was not only naval means, but also capacity-building so that LAF-Navy could eventually control its own territorial waters:

Lebanon's current naval capabilities are too limited to effectively patrol Lebanon's 200 kilometres of coastline in order to secure the maritime border. I would therefore be grateful if the United Nations could provide a naval task force that would help prevent the unauthorized entry of arms or related material by sea into Lebanon, until such time that our naval and security forces are able to fulfil these tasks on their own.²⁸

Although the naval embargo was lifted by Israel on 7 September, the UN – taking into account the extreme asymmetries in naval power between Lebanon and Israel – decided to attend to the Lebanese Government's request. An interim task force was deployed until October 2006, when the UNIFIL MTF took over. The MTF was, from the start, a multinational fleet, with early participation by EUROMARFOR, a force formed in 1995 by France, Italy, Portugal and Spain.²⁹ European countries alternated at the helm of the MTF until 2011, when Brazil took over.³⁰

The MTF units operate in the Area of Maritime Operations (AMO), which stretches along the entire length of the Lebanese coastline and westwards up to 43 nautical miles into the Mediterranean.³¹ Within this space, the MTF carries out two main tasks. First, it conducts maritime interdiction and surveillance operations in order to assist the LAF-Navy in preventing illegal shipments into Lebanon, especially of arms and related materials. This task involves identifying, stopping, diverting or referring suspect vessels to Lebanese

²⁴AL Monitor, 'UNIFIL's Uncertain Future.

²⁵Murphy, 'Peacekeeping in Lebanon.

²⁶Houri, 'Prospects and Challenges'.

²⁷BBC News, 'UN Urges Israel'.

²⁸Lebanese Republic, 'Letter of Prime Minister Siniora to Secretary-General Kofi Annan', Beirut, 6 Sept. 2006.

²⁹UNSC, *Resolution 1701*.

³⁰UN, 'UNIFIL Maritime Task Force'.

³¹The first 12 of the Area constitute Lebanese legal waters, while the rest are international waters.

authorities for inspection, specially of merchant traffic along the approach corridors to the country's three key harbours (Beirut, Tripoli and Sidon).³² From 2006 to 2013, the MTF carried out 63,000 hailings and referred about 6,000 ships for inspection by the LAF-Navy.³³

Second, as part of its long-term goal of handing over security responsibilities to the LAF-Navy, the MTF works to enhance local naval capabilities. This task is accomplished through different types of operational, tactical and joint exercises, as well as cadet training at naval school and at sea.³⁴ These efforts are complemented with initiatives by other countries that provide capacity-building and technical assistance, as well as radar and other naval materials on a bilateral basis. Participation in the MTF thus entails a broad range of sea-based equipment and capabilities.

Brazil and international security

Brazilian policy elites have long sought to play a more direct role in international security. Although Brazil has often been referred to as an emerging or rising power,³⁵ in the 2000s its foreign policy assumed this identity more openly. Brazil's aspiration to global power status dates as far back as the founding of the League of Nations and, later, of the United Nations. At both organizations, Brazil aspired to a permanent seat at the Security Council; during the creation of the UN, this possibility was raised by American foreign policy advisers yet blocked by Russia and the United Kingdom.³⁶ Since then, Brazilian foreign policy has upheld a rules-based multilateral system, promoting the UN as the most legitimate arena for norms-setting in global debates, including in international security. At the same time, in the post-cold war period, Brazil has sought to participate more directly in those normative debates, as well as in concrete UN initiatives, so as to become more of a 'rules-maker' rather than just a 'rules-taker'.

Regarding international security norms, Brazilian foreign policy-makers have become increasingly critical of what they perceive to be the excessive securitization of international relations, including the UN. In particular, Brazil contests military interventionism that seems narrowly self-interested, especially when military operations circumvent the rules of the UN, as in the cases of the US- and NATO-led missions in Iraq and Libya. In arguing

³²This task is related to the objective of establishing between the Blue Line and the Litani River an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL: <http://utasktasknifil.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=11561&language=en-US> (accessed 2 Dec. 2015).

³³Upon request by the LAF-Navy, the MTF also boards and inspects suspect ships itself. See UN, 'UNIFIL Maritime Task Force'.

³⁴Interview with Navy officer, Rio de Janeiro, Jan. 2015; and UNIFIL, 'Maritime Task Force's Role'.

³⁵See, for instance, Trinkunas, *Brazil's Rise*.

³⁶Diniz, 'Peacekeeping'.

for greater reliance upon dialogue and preventive diplomacy rather than the use of force, Brazilian officials frequently refer to the 150 years of peace Brazil has enjoyed with its neighbouring states,³⁷ as well as the fact that Brazil (along with rival Argentina) voluntarily gave up its nuclear arms programme in the 1980s as a way of diffusing regional tensions. In 2011, Brazil proposed the principle of Responsibility while Protecting (RwP) as a way to temper the concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), although the proposal was not backed by consistent political commitment by Brazilian authorities.³⁸

Brazilian aspirations to global player status in international security also feature a strong regional dimension. Within South America, Brazil has worked to become a key actor in conflict mediation, although it has taken on this role somewhat inconsistently. Concurrently, Brazil has worked to launch and reinforce regional institutions, for instance spearheading the 2008 creation of the Union of South American States (UNASUR), which includes a Defence Council. In all of these initiatives, Brazilian foreign and defence policy discourses underscore the role of dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution, making reference to the absence of nuclear weapons and the relative lack of interstate disputes and civil wars in contemporary South America.³⁹

In the South Atlantic, Brazilian interests have also expanded, especially after the discovery (first announced in 2006) of large reserves of oil and gas in the pre-salt layers on and off the continental shelf. These findings have boosted the maritime dimension of Brazil's national defence policy, which historically focused on the Amazon and the River Plate region. Brazil's new national defence policy features a strong naval component focusing on the country's territorial waters, which the Brazilian Government is seeking to expand via a proposal filed with the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea.⁴⁰ This renewed attention to Brazil's maritime vicinity includes new threat perceptions, particularly those related to the intensifying contraband of drugs, people and goods across the South Atlantic. Over the past few years, non-conventional threats along the African coast have also featured more prominently in Brazilian discussions of maritime security. For example, Brazilian officials have referred to piracy – which has been spreading in and around the Gulf of Guinea – as having the potential to spread across the South Atlantic.⁴¹

This changing conception of the South Atlantic as a space of new cooperation opportunities and emerging threats has enabled the Brazilian Navy to revive an aspiration – dating back to the cold war – of expanding

³⁷See, for instance, MRE, 'Speech'.

³⁸Stuenkel and Tourinho, 'Regulating Intervention'.

³⁹Presidência da República, 'Discurso do Presidente'.

⁴⁰Ministério da Defesa (2012) Livro Branco de Defesa Nacional.

⁴¹BBC, 'Pirataria e terrorismo'.

the country's naval capacity. Brazil's ongoing naval upgrading programme encompasses not only vessel acquisitions but also the development of a fleet of conventional and nuclear-powered submarines (underway in collaboration with France). The choice to invest heavily in the submarine project has been justified before domestic audiences with reference to the need for enhanced naval deterrence capacity in the South Atlantic, as well as the additional speed conferred by the nuclear propulsion. To increase popular awareness of these interests, the Navy has launched the 'Blue Amazon' campaign, which draws parallels to the environmental richness, geographic vastness and strategic importance historically attributed to the (green) Amazon region.⁴²

In addition to the naval upgrading programme, Brazilian defence cooperation has expanded considerably, both on a bilateral and multilateral basis and focusing on the South Atlantic. Over the past decade, Brazil has signed bilateral cooperation agreements with practically every state along the South Atlantic, many covering the provision of defence materials, training and joint exercises.⁴³ At the same time, Brazil has led the revitalization of the South Atlantic Zone of Peace and Cooperation (ZOPACAS), a mechanism focusing on maritime security and development issues that originated during the cold war but that had lost steam in the 1990s.

With respect to hands-on involvement with security issues, Brazil has participated in UN peacekeeping and related missions since 1947,⁴⁴ and it has contributed personnel to UN operations since 1956, when military observers were sent to the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB). Since then, Brazil has participated in 25 peacekeeping operations and civilian UN missions.⁴⁵

Over time, Brazil's role in UN peacekeeping has gone through several changes. During the 1950s and 1960s, Brazil increased its troop contributions and extended its reach by joining UN peacekeeping missions in the Middle East.⁴⁶ Brazil's longest mission engagement during the cold war, in fact, was with the First United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) (1957–67), contributing 6,300 troops.⁴⁷ Brazil's contributions then decreased, picking up again only in the 1990s, when it began including police officers and civilians (as in Angola in United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) III

⁴²Abdenur and Marcondes, *Brazil in the South Atlantic*.

⁴³Seabra, 'A Harder Edge'.

⁴⁴Even before the formation of the UN, Brazil contributed to multinational peacekeeping efforts; during the 1930s, it played an important role in mediating the Leticia conflict between Colombia and Peru.

⁴⁵Regionally, Brazil also contributed to Organization of American States (OAS) efforts in the Caribbean and to the Military Observer Mission Ecuador-Peru (MOMEP), a multinational mission from the guarantor countries of the 1942 Rio Protocol (along with Argentina, Chile and the USA) tasked with supervising the cease-fire and separation of forces during the 1995 Cenepa war between Ecuador and Peru.

⁴⁶Fontoura, *O Brasil*.

⁴⁷Exército Brasileiro, 'Missões de Paz'.

and Mozambique in United Nations Operation in Mozambique). Brazil began participating in peacekeeping missions in Timor-Leste – a move that, despite entailing vast geographic distances, reflected Brazilian foreign policy's prioritization of Lusophone countries.

In 2004, under the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–10), Brazil's participation in UN peacekeeping expanded considerably when it assumed the Force Commander position in MINUSTAH and became the top troop contributor to the mission.⁴⁸ This marked a significant shift in Brazil's contributions to UN peacekeeping, because until then Brazilian foreign policy had been critical of, and hesitant to take part in, UN Chapter VII missions (as was the case of MINUSTAH).⁴⁹ Among the motivations cited by the Ministry of Foreign Relations for Brazil's involvement in Haiti were: solidarity with another Latin American country; the hope that Haiti would return to democracy and rule of law; a shared cultural background due to common roots in slave flows from Africa; and the fear that instability in Haiti would spread elsewhere in the region.⁵⁰

Despite the high visibility of Brazil's participation in MINUSTAH, during this period it has also contributed personnel to other missions. In June 2013, retired General Carlos Alberto Santos Cruz, who had served as MINUSTAH Force Commander, accepted the invitation to assume military leadership of MONUSCO in Eastern Congo, the largest peacekeeping mission ever undertaken by the UN. In addition, as of 2014 Brazilian military and police officers are serving in 13 peacekeeping operations and offices (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, United Nations Mission in South Sudan, United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, United Nations Mission in Liberia, MONUSCO and MINUSTAH).⁵¹ This makes Brazil the 21th largest troop contributor to the UN, with 1,743 military personnel from all three branches of the Armed Forces participating in these missions.⁵² Brazil also makes indirect contributions, for instance through the creation and development of its peacekeeping training centre (the Brazilian Peacekeeping Operations Joint Centre, CCOPAB), which trains Brazilian military and civilians, as well as other nationalities. CCOPAB has also begun carrying out capacity-building in partner states participating in peacekeeping, such as Angola.⁵³

⁴⁸Brazil initially sent 1,200 personnel (not counting the Force Commander and staff) to MINUSTAH. This number increased to around 2,200 after the 2010 earthquake.

⁴⁹Kenkel, 'South America's Emerging Power'.

⁵⁰Marcondes, 'O Brasil'.

⁵¹CCOPAB, 'Missões com participações'.

⁵²In May 2013, Brazil was the 11th top troop contributing country, with some 2,200 military and a few police officers deployed. UN, 'Peacekeeping Statistics'.

⁵³See, for instance, CCOPAB, 'CCOPAB MMT Continues'.

At the same time, Brazil has engaged with debates and initiatives related to UN peacebuilding. Within the UN, Brazil has long advocated on behalf of Guinea-Bissau, working to galvanize attention and resources from the international community so as to break the country's cycle of recurring violence through a combination of security measures and development initiatives. In early 2014, this engagement led Brazil to assume the presidency of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a post it held until December of that year.

As a result of these activities, expectations of Brazilian involvement in international security have also increased. In September 2012, the UN Under-secretary General for Peacekeeping, Edmond Mullet, criticized Brazil's comparatively low defence spending (around 1.5 per cent of the GDP at the time) and asked it to participate in other peacekeeping operations, especially since troop reduction in MINUSTAH was already underway. The Ministry of Defence replied that, at that point in time, Brazil had no intention of making troops available to missions in other parts of the world.⁵⁴ This stance has prompted charges that Brazil is a 'security free-rider', 'benefitting more from the international security system than it actually contributes'.⁵⁵ The opportunity to lead the UNIFIL MTF thus became – among other factors – a way to counter such criticism.

More recently, Brazil's status as a rising power has been questioned during the administration of President Dilma Rousseff (2011–present). On the economic side, after a peak GDP annual growth rate of 7.5 per cent in 2010, the country began to experience a considerable slowdown, with GDP growth declining, hovering around 1 per cent in 2013 and 2014. Politically, a series of corruption scandals broke out in 2014, involving not only the country's state-controlled oil company, Petrobras, and major Brazilian construction companies, but also several political parties. In turn, this scenario has generated new budgetary pressures that affect nearly all sectors of government, including the foreign and defence ministries.⁵⁶ Financial contributions to multilateral organizations, including UN agencies and programmes, have been cut, and defence-related budgets have been slashed. These cost-cutting measures have been launched precisely as the UN has decided to reduce MINUSTAH, with the Brazilian Government announcing a major troop withdrawal, leaving only an estimated 850 soldiers in Port-au-Prince for emergency situations.⁵⁷ It is against this context of deepening crisis and new financial

⁵⁴Tahiane Stochero, 'Gasto do Brasil com defesa é "tão baixo", diz chefe de missões da ONU', *O Globo* [Rio de Janeiro], 22 Sept. 2012, <http://g1.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2012/09/gasto-do-brasil-com-defesa-e-tao-baixo-diz-chefe-de-missoes-da-onu.html>.

⁵⁵Crandall, *Hemispheric Giants*, p. 180.

⁵⁶Jonathan Watts, 'Brazil in Crisis Mode as Ruling Party Sees Public Trust Rapidly Dissolving', *Guardian* [London], 17 Mar. 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/17/brazil-crisis-petrobras-scandal-dilma-rousseff-protests>.

⁵⁷Portal Brasil, 'Forças Armadas brasileiras

constraints that Brazil's contribution to UNIFIL, primarily through the MTF, has taken place.

Brazil and the UNIFIL maritime task force

In February 2011, Brazil assumed command of the UNIFIL MTF. Lebanese President Michel Suleiman and Brazilian Vice President Michel Temer both attended the handover ceremony, held at the Beirut port. From the UN and Lebanese sides, the decision to invite Brazil resulted from several factors. It was reported at the time that Indonesia was being considered to replace Italy at the helm of the MTF, but since Indonesia does not recognize Israel, the Israeli Government expressed concern that cooperation with the Israeli Navy would suffer.⁵⁸ In contrast, it was thought that both sides would be more accepting of Brazil, which has had solid relations with both Lebanon and Israel, in addition to other countries in the region.⁵⁹ In addition, Brazil's accumulated experience through MINUSTAH had raised its visibility in UN peacekeeping, generating new demands for its participation.

On Brazil's end, participation in the UNIFIL MTF entailed a variety of risks, including political and security ones. Brazil's engagement in Haiti had come under attack from political opposition, civil society entities and academics concerned with the use of force in Haitian urban areas, as well with as the adaptation of strategies used in MINUSTAH to combat organized crime and 'pacify' *favela* communities in Rio de Janeiro.⁶⁰ Another common set of criticisms, levelled at Brazil's international role more generally, relate to lingering challenges that Brazil faces domestically; some analysts question the government's decision to contribute to initiatives abroad when resources are stretched thin at home.

In addition, deploying ships and personnel to a distant region represents a logistically complex operation, and risks are enhanced by the recurring instability in the Middle East. Partly because Brazil has enjoyed peace with its neighbouring states for a century and a half, the Brazilian public is not used to seeing Brazilian soldiers and other personnel returning in body bags. Prior to assuming the military leadership of MINUSTAH, Brazil had incurred a total of 41 fatalities in its UN peacekeeping mission participations.⁶¹ During the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, another 18 Brazilian military

⁵⁸Yaakov Katz, 'Israel Concerned about UNIFIL Takeover', *Jerusalem Post* [Jerusalem], 28 Apr. 2010, www.jpost.com/Israel/Israel-concerned-about-UNIFIL-takeover.

⁵⁹Brazil also formally recognized the Palestinian state in 2010, according to the borders of pre-1967, but has continued to pursue deeper relations with Israel.

⁶⁰Hirst and Nasser, *Brazil's Involvement*.

⁶¹Brazil has lost 26 troops in MINUSTAH, including 18 personnel who perished during the 2010 earthquake; seven in UNEF, four in UNAVEM, and one each in United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor and United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. Source: UN Peacekeeping, 'Fatalities by Nationality and Mission'.

personnel were killed. More substantial losses in the Middle East could lead to a backlash against Brazilian personnel contributions to UN missions.⁶²

Finally, participation in peacekeeping can incur significant financial costs to the Brazilian Government. Brazil lacks adequate legislation to specifically regulate the pay of personnel involved in international peacekeeping, and congressional approval is required for any supplementary funding.⁶³ The lack of clear rules foments controversy about the desirability of participation, even if part of the costs of training, transport and materials for peacekeeping is subsequently reimbursed by the United Nations.⁶⁴ Since, in 2010, Brazil was already heavily involved in MINUSTAH and contributing to other missions, accepting the UNIFIL MTF command represented taking on a very different set of challenges, at additional expense and in a distant region of the planet.

Despite these risks, in December 2010 the Brazilian Senate approved the sending of personnel and equipment to Lebanon as part of UNIFIL, paving the way for Brazil's formal acceptance of the MTF command.⁶⁵ What explains the decision to take on such a role? Three initial major motivations can be identified: projecting Brazil in international security; deepening bilateral relations with Lebanon; and naval capacity-building with a view to expanding Brazil's role in the South Atlantic.

Foreign policy priorities

First, contributing to UNIFIL aligned with the objective, underscored during Lula's administration, of enhancing Brazil's role in international security, including through more direct involvement in the Middle East. This goal was openly acknowledged in the government proposal to assume the command of the UNIFIL MTF; the document mentions that participation provided the opportunity to 'broaden the country's international role in the maintenance of international peace and security'.⁶⁶ From a foreign policy perspective, leading the MTF represented a chance to assume a position of greater visibility, which was compatible with the Brazilian Government's drive to assume leadership positions in major multilateral settings, including UN agencies and initiatives.⁶⁷ Specifically with regards to international security, taking on the helm of the MTF would also help to demonstrate Brazil's commitment to international security; as a former Force Commander has noted,

⁶²UNIFIL has had 275 fatalities since 1978.

⁶³See, for instance, Presidência da República, 'Lei No. 10.937'.

⁶⁴*Folha de São Paulo*, 'ONU reembolsou 26%'.

⁶⁵Senado Federal, 'Plenário aprova envio'.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷In recent years, the Brazilian Government has actively backed the successful candidacies of Brazilians to the positions of Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (José Graziano da Silva) and Director-General of the World Trade Organization (Roberto Azevêdo).

'it does not go unacknowledged' that participation in UNIFIL requires complex logistics given the geographic distances involved.⁶⁸ The importance of accepting leadership positions within UN peacekeeping had already been noted by an Inter-Ministerial Group on Peacekeeping, launched in May 1993; the group stressed that, in addition to advancing foreign policy goals, leadership positions in peacekeeping operations can be useful towards defending the interests of deployed troops and motivating the officers involved.⁶⁹

There was also an element of novelty in the invitation to join UNIFIL, since the MTF is the first naval component of a UN peacekeeping operation. In addition, the force's previous commanders were all from European countries (from 2006 to 2010, Germany, Italy, France and Belgium alternated at the helm of the MTF); Brazil accepting to command the MTF would represent the first time that a non-NATO country led a UN peacekeeping naval force, as well as a chance to lead a multinational fleet.⁷⁰ In the case of MIN-USTAH, Brazilian diplomats stressed that Brazil would be the first non-major power to lead the mission's military actions and that no Latin American country had ever led such an operation. Through UNIFIL, Brazil would have a chance to assume a leadership position entirely outside of its own region.

The timing of the invitation coincided with a period when the Lula administration made concerted efforts to increase Brazil's relevance to security issues and debates, including conflict mediation, in the Middle East. In 2007, Brazil was the only South American country among the 40 states invited to the Israel–Palestine peace talks at Annapolis – the first time a Latin American country participated in a Middle Eastern peace conference.⁷¹ In May of the same year, Brazil and Turkey joined forces in trying to ease tensions over the Iranian nuclear programme; the Tehran nuclear fuel swap agreement was signed by the three parties, but the arrangement suffered from a last-minute withdrawal of support from the United States. Although Brazil's mediation attempt was criticized by Brazilian as well as foreign analysts, and its relations with Iran cooled after the attempt, diplomats confirm that the ambition to expand the country's role in the Middle East has not abated.⁷² Joining UNIFIL was thus a way to ensure that Brazil would remain relevant to Middle Eastern security for a number of years.

However, the decision to take part was not simply part of a 'rising power strategy'; Brazil has, on different occasions, seen its own interests in the Middle East directly affected by conflict. When the 2006 war between Lebanon and Israel broke out, the Brazilian Government had to evacuate

⁶⁸Interview with Navy official conducted in Rio de Janeiro, Jan. 2015.

⁶⁹Fontoura, *O Brasil*, 229.

⁷⁰UNIFIL, 'FAQs'.

⁷¹Marcelo Ninio, 'Brasil mandará Amorim para Annapolis', *Folha de São Paulo*, 22 Nov. 2007.

⁷²Interview with senior Brazilian diplomat, Rio de Janeiro, Feb. 2015.

around 500 Brazilian citizens residing in Lebanon. The ensuing humanitarian crisis also was a contributing factor towards the strengthening of a new division dedicated to humanitarian cooperation (the Coordenação-Geral de Ações Internacionais de Combate à Fome, or CGFOME) whose priority areas include the Middle East.⁷³

Strengthening ties to Middle Eastern governments was also an important element of consideration. Lula's foreign policy was not the first in Brazilian history to promote ties to other developing countries, but his administration granted unprecedented importance to South–South relations. This strategy of deepening ties to other non-global power states included the Middle East, where Brazilian commercial interests date back to the 1970s and 1980s. Bilaterally, Brazil worked to deepen relations with most Arab countries, as well as Iran and Israel. On the multilateral front, Brazil spearheaded the creation of a bi-regional forum, the Summit of South American–Arab countries (ASPA). Launched in 2005 in Brasília, ASPA has held three head of state meetings so far.⁷⁴ The Middle East, in other words, became an increasingly important way for Brazil to expand its global reach, in security and beyond.

Brazil–Lebanon ties

In addition to helping project Brazil as a global security player, joining UNIFIL also provided an opportunity for Brazil to deepen ties with Lebanon specifically.⁷⁵ When the invitation to lead the MTF was extended, both the UN and the Brazilian Government stressed the demographic, cultural and economic ties between Brazil and Lebanon.⁷⁶

In the case of Lebanon, the demographic ties to Brazil are considerable. There are an estimated 6 million Lebanese expatriates and descendants in Brazil (versus 3.5 million living in Lebanon).⁷⁷ This diaspora – the product of several waves of migration dating back to the late nineteenth century – is well represented among professional, business and political groups. Senator Pedro Simon, who steered the proposal to send personnel to UNIFIL, is himself the son of Lebanese immigrants, as is Vice President Temer.⁷⁸ Civil

⁷³Remarks by Brazilian diplomat made at the workshop 'International Cooperation in Health and Brazilian Foreign Policy', organized by Fiocruz at the Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública, 12–13 Jan. 2014.

⁷⁴After the inaugural meeting in Brasília, in 2005, summits were held in Doha, Qatar (Mar. 2009) and Lima, Peru (Oct. 2012).

⁷⁵*DefesaNet*, 'Militares que vão integrar missão da ONU no Líbano recebem orientações no Ministério da Defesa', 16 Oct. 2014.

⁷⁶This was not the first time the Brazilian government called upon cultural ties to help justify participation in UN peacekeeping; in the case of MINUSTAH, the MRE had stressed (among other criteria) that Brazil and Haiti shared African cultural roots, evoking the idea of solidarity so as to justify the official government posture of non-indifference.

⁷⁷Senado Federal, 'Comunidade libanesa no Brasil é maior que população do Líbano', Brasília, 22 Apr. 2010.

⁷⁸Senado Federal, 'Simon destaca exposição que comemora visita do imperador Dom Pedro II ao Líbano', Brasília, 24 Nov. 2011.

society is also active in maintaining transnational ties; for instance, in 2006, a 'solidarity mission' made up of representatives from Brazilian unions, social movements, political parties and human rights groups visited Beirut to document abuses during the conflict with Israel.⁷⁹ In another example, the Maronite Foundation organizes trips to Lebanon in which Brazilian youth with Lebanese ancestry are encouraged to take part.⁸⁰

There is also a sizeable Brazilian population residing in Lebanon – an estimated 10,000, mostly in Beirut and the Bekaa Valley.⁸¹ This population has been directly affected by conflict; in addition to the aforementioned evacuation of Brazilians during the 2006 war, six Brazilian citizens died during the conflict.⁸² The Lebanese community in Brazil was instrumental in launching the country's humanitarian efforts during this period, primarily through the collection of food donations in São Paulo that, according to the Ministério das Relações Exteriores (Ministry of External Relations) (MRE), eventually reached 90,000 people in Lebanon.⁸³

Brazil has also increased its humanitarian cooperation for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In 2008, for instance, Brazil spent US\$200,000 towards the rebuilding of the Nahr El-Bared refugee camp, in the country's north. In 2010, Brazil spent another US\$500,000 to support around 27,000 refugees there through food distribution, emergency and temporary housing, reconstruction, water and sanitation and social services.⁸⁴

As the civil war in Syria has intensified, Brazil has also expanded its humanitarian cooperation to new arrivals in Lebanon. In 2012, aside from continuing its contributions to help Palestinian refugees in the country, Brazil sent US \$120,000 to support Syrian refugees in Lebanon.⁸⁵ In 2015, despite a scenario of deepening economic crisis at home, Brazil continued to donate medicine – organized in 'calamity kits' – to the Lebanese Government for the care of Syrian refugees in Lebanese territory.⁸⁶ In the meantime, the Syrian civil war and the growing flows of refugees from that conflict, including into Lebanon, became a more visible topic in Brazil as the country began to accept more Syrian refugees and to debate more openly its own role in international migration.⁸⁷

⁷⁹Merli, 'Missão da sociedade'.

⁸⁰Agência de Notícias Brasil-Árabe, 'Fundação leva'.

⁸¹DefesaNet, 'UNIFIL – Militares que vão integrar missão da ONU no Líbano recebem orientações no Ministério da Defesa', 16 Oct. 2014.

⁸²MRE, *O Brasil*.

⁸³Brazil donated medications to the Lebanese government. Brazil's humanitarian cooperation included the donation of 5.2 tons of food and 10 medicine kits, each capable of reaching up to 9,000 people. Brazil also attended a request by the Syrian government with five medicine kits. MRE, 'Cooperação Humanitária'.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Coordenação-Geral de Ações Internacionais de Combate à Fome, 'Doação de medicamentos'.

⁸⁷The number of refugees in Brazil nearly doubled between 2011 and 2015, rising from 4,218 to 8,400. According to the Ministry of Justice, the majority of refugees living in Brazil (2,077 individuals) come

Building naval capacity

Finally, participation in the UNIFIL MTF was viewed as a unique opportunity to expand Brazil's own defence capacity. Indeed, within the proposal for joining UNIFIL that was sent to the Senate, the government argued that assuming the MTF lead offered a chance to 'help diversify the Armed Forces experience abroad' for future deployments at home as well as domestically.⁸⁸ More specifically, Brazil's growing maritime concerns and ambitions in the South Atlantic made participation in UNIFIL a chance to test and broaden the Brazilian Navy's experience in a variety of tasks, from surveillance to maritime interdiction operations. According to naval officers interviewed during this research, this enhanced capacity may prove useful not only in carrying out surveillance of the pre-salt areas in the South Atlantic, but also in helping to prevent contraband into Brazilian ports.⁸⁹ Although port surveillance in Brazil is the purview of government divisions, the Navy's participation in UNIFIL provides it with valuable hands-on experience with maritime interdiction operations. Moreover, officials believe that this experience may acquire greater importance as concerns deepen regarding the spread of piracy in the South Atlantic within and beyond the Gulf of Guinea.

Although the Brazilian Navy participates in a wide variety of cooperation initiatives, including naval exercises, officers also emphasize that joining a UN peacekeeping mission entails a vastly different level of experience acquisition. As one Navy official put it, '[y]ou are not there to train; it's a real mission'.⁹⁰ The UNIFIL MTF, moreover, offered a very different set of experiences than MINUSTAH. According to a former Brazilian commander of the MTF, Haiti had been 'a laboratory of doctrine' for the Armed Forces, for instance with experiences related to guaranteeing law and order in urban areas. However, in MINUSTAH the naval learning component – aside from the heavy participation of marines – has been very limited. Brazil sent frigates and other vessels to Haiti, but their role in MINUSTAH is limited to transport of personnel, vehicles and materials.⁹¹ In contrast, joining the UNIFIL MTF offered the chance to involve components of the Armed Forces, and particularly the Navy, that had not been as deeply involved in UN peacekeeping.⁹² UNIFIL

from Syria and arrived since the beginning of the civil war. Lebanese are the fifth largest group (389), after arrivals from Angola (1,480), Colombia (1,093) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (844). Ministério da Justiça, 'Brasi bate recorde'.

⁸⁸ Senado Federal, 'Plenário aprova envio'.

⁸⁹ According to the Federal Police, inadequate vigilance has contributed to the increasing use of maritime routes to smuggle arms into Brazil, which already has high levels of armed violence.

⁹⁰ Maurício Moraes, 'Brasil vai liderar força marítima da ONU no Líbano', *R7*, 19 Jan. 2011, <http://noticias.r7.com/internacional/noticias/brasil-vai-liderar-forca-maritima-da-onu-no-libano-20110119.html> (accessed 2 Dec. 2015).

⁹¹ Marinha do Brasil, 'Missão das Nações Unidas Haiti'.

⁹² The Army (partly because it is far larger than the Navy) has sent many more troops to UN peacekeeping missions, and within the Navy, it is the Marines who make up the vast majority of military personnel

thus offered a chance for officers and sailors alike to acquire first-hand experience, along with Marines. More generally, as a complex mission within an environment of generalized urban violence and civil disturbances, MINUSTAH represented a very different learning opportunity than UNIFIL, whose focus is on inter-state conflict (although with the later addition of a significant non-state actor, Hezbollah) and where Brazil's participation would concentrate on sea-based operations.

The decision to lead the MTF can also be understood within the broader context of efforts to reinvent the Brazilian Armed Forces in the period after the return to democracy after 21 years of military rule. Participation in UN peacekeeping represents not only a wage increase for military wages and a chance for the acquisition of supplementary defence equipment, but also a morale boost for the military due to the prestige associated with participating in an international initiative of high visibility. The process of redefining the Brazilian Armed Forces within broader Brazilian society has included not only attempts to foster greater links between the military and civilians, but also to foment greater alignment between the country's foreign policy and defence agendas.⁹³ UNIFIL's MTF is particularly relevant to these goals due to the opportunities for enhanced cooperation with multiple navies from around the world.

Joining the MTF also offered a chance to enhance Brazil's credentials as a provider of naval training, which started with Namibia in 1994 but has become an essential component of Brazil's 'naval diplomacy', particularly within the South Atlantic. In Lebanon, Brazilian military staff participate in capacity-building for LAF-Navy,⁹⁴ and Brazil's Naval School provides scholarships for Lebanese counterparts (as of January 2015, six Lebanese military were enrolled in the academy).⁹⁵ Some military training institutions in Brazil have developed long-term interests in Brazil remaining a contributor to peacekeeping. CCOPAB, for instance, has focused heavily on capacitating Brazilian military and civilian personnel to serve in MINUSTAH, but it was created with the broader mission of evaluating and training military and civilians designated to peace missions, among other attributions. As the mission in Haiti winds down, CCOPAB has also looked to take on the broader gamut of peacekeeping training activities, including as they relate to UNIFIL.⁹⁶

On occasion, differences of opinion regarding Brazil's participation in UNIFIL have emerged within the country's foreign policy and defence

deployments. Some military personnel deployed to UNIFIL have previously served in MINUSTAH, indicating that there is also some overlap, and thus continuity, in Brazil's engagement in these missions.

⁹³Hirst and Nasser, *Brazil's Involvement*.

⁹⁴DefesaNet, 'UNIFIL – Militares brasileiros se preparam para assumir missão no Líbano', 21 Oct. 2014.

⁹⁵Interview with Navy official, Rio de Janeiro, Jan. 2015.

⁹⁶For instance, CCOPAB has hosted a series of commander and staff courses for the MTF aimed at familiarizing the officers with the specific requirements of the mission. Brazilian officers who are serving in the mission and who have been recently demobilized participate in the training modules. Brazilian Peace Operations Joint Training Center Sergio Vieira de Mello, 'Another Edition'.

communities. As far back as 2011, there have been discussions concerning the possibility of Brazil sending troops to the non-MTF part of UNIFIL. In November 2014, seven troops, including four officers, joined the Spanish contingency in the Eastern Sector of UNIFIL, which monitors the border between Lebanon and Israel. According to the designated MTF Commander-to-be at that time, the Navy wanted another engagement in UN peacekeeping – he affirmed that ‘our Marines are ready’ – but the Ministry of Defence declined to expand the contribution in this direction.

These factors also help to explain not only the decision to join UNIFIL – on 14 November 2011, Italy handed over the command of the MTF to Brazil⁹⁷ – but also the commitment to weather the ongoing crises, both in the Middle East and in Brazil. Even as debates within political circles and the media about the appropriateness of expenditures abroad have intensified, Brazil has maintained its participation in UNIFIL by keeping the same number of vessels (and the required staff) deployed to Lebanon, continuing to carry out the related training activities at CCOPAB, and divulging plans for the 2016 MTF command shift to yet another Brazilian Rear Admiral.⁹⁸

The reduction in MINUSTAH troops, in particular, has triggered renewed debates about how Brazil can, and to what extent it should, attempt to maintain a visible presence in UN peacekeeping. Interviews with MRE and Armed Forces representatives indicate that, because naval peacekeeping is aligned with the country’s maritime strategy priorities, it is widely considered to be a relatively efficient way of maintaining Brazil on the global peacekeeping stage and of boosting its image and role as a contributor to humanitarian efforts. In September 2015, as flows of refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean into Europe expanded, the Brazilian Navy published photographs showing the corvette *Barroso*, which had been assigned to the MTF, as its crew helped to rescue 220 people from a listing boat off the coast of Sicily. The Brazilian Navy circulated photos of UNIFIL officers posing with the rescued children in front of the Brazilian flag aboard the corvette.⁹⁹

As of this writing, the Ministry of Defence is still considering the possibility of extending its UNIFIL contributions beyond the MTF to include a terrestrial component. Any significant expansion of Brazil’s role in the mission, however, would have to balance the fast-changing political debates taking place within the context of the domestic crisis with the desire to maintain

⁹⁷Since then, the frigates ‘Liberal’, ‘Constituição’ and ‘União’ have alternated in this position. As of late 2014, the ninth Brazilian contingent was being deployed to UNIFIL. The first Brazilian commander, of the MTF, Rear Admiral Luiz Henrique Caroli, was put in charge of eight ships with 800 personnel from five countries: Germany; Greece; Turkey; Indonesia; and Bangladesh. The command handover also marked the first time a Brazilian Navy ship was incorporated into a UN peacekeeping mission. *Marinha do Brasil*, ‘Força Tarefa Marítima’.

⁹⁸Ministério da Defesa, ‘Brasileiros que vão integrar missão’.

⁹⁹*Poder Naval*, ‘Marinha do Brasil divulga fotos do resgate de refugiados, pela corveta Barroso, no Mediterrâneo’, 5 Sept. 2015.

Brazil's relevance in UN peacekeeping in light of troop reductions in MINUSTAH. The security, political and defence motivations identified through this research – all long-term concerns for Brazilian foreign policy and defence decision-makers – suggest that the current crisis in Brazil may delay rather than preclude an intensification of Brazil's engagement in UNIFIL.

Conclusion

Brazil's identity as a rising power is not solely dependent on its role in international security, but its engagement in UN peacekeeping has become an increasingly important part of its international agenda. At the same time, Brazil faces new constraints on its contributions to UN peace missions, especially given the economic and political crisis that began in Brazil in 2014. This article explores why Brazil, which had proven hesitant to take on major UN peacekeeping engagements since assuming the helm of MINUSTAH's military component in 2004, chose to accept a 2010 invitation to lead UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force. The article also examines why Brazil has opted to maintain that commitment in light of the deepening crisis.

The mission, after all, entails a very different set of risks and commitments than has MINUSTAH (or, for that matter, any of Brazil's previous engagements with UN peace missions). In addition to being a naval peacekeeping force, the MTF requires deployment in a geographically distant and highly unstable region – one that has only become more unpredictable during the past few years, as reflected in the Syrian civil war, the expanding role of ISIS and the resulting refugee crisis. In addition, Brazil's participation in UNIFIL has unfolded just as internal debates in Brazil about the country's role abroad have become more polarized.

Analysis of official documents and interviews shows that, despite this rapidly changing context both at home and in the Middle East, a combination of security, political and defence concerns explains the decision to engage in the MTF, as well as the choice to maintain that involvement. This general finding confirms Bellamy and Williams' assertion that motivations driving contributions of troops and police to UN missions cut across a range of rationales, but it also underscores the fact that the relative weight of considerations – especially those behind specific decisions to contribute to a mission – is subject to change, as the increased salience of the refugee crisis shows.

From a foreign policy perspective, taking on the helm of MTF offered Brazil a chance to play a more direct role in Middle Eastern security affairs, which was aligned with the Lula Government's broader aspirations in the region as well as globally. Assuming a leadership position became all the more important because the opportunity arose precisely as the MINUSTAH mission began to scale down. Second, Brazil's deep ties to Lebanon, anchored in a substantial diaspora community but enhanced more recently through the

current refugee crisis, helped to tilt the balance in favour of participation. And third, Brazil's growing maritime interests in the South Atlantic, as encoded in its revamped national defence strategy, have broadened military interests in building up naval capacity, not only through direct engagement in the MTF but also through the cooperation ties that the position entails.

Combined, these factors prompted different branches of the Brazilian Government to converge in their interests in participating in UNIFIL through the MTF. More recently, the budgetary pressures and political questioning of Brazil's role abroad have made these contributions all the more remarkable, especially since – far from reducing its presence in UNIFIL – Brazil has intensified its role and is currently considering an expansion through land-based troop contributions to the mission.

There are two key take-away points from this analysis – one is case-specific, and the other, more conceptual. In terms of Brazil, the decision to join the MTF, especially in light of the leadership opportunity and novelty component, indicates that naval peacekeeping represents a promising area in which rising powers, especially those with growing naval interests, may expand their contributions to UN peace missions. Given the innovations in naval cooperation undertaken elsewhere on the globe, for instance in the anti-piracy initiatives in the Gulf of Aden and in the Gulf of Guinea, such contributions may go beyond the deployment of personnel, vessels and equipment, also helping to shape the normative debates about how naval components may be more effectively incorporated into multilateral peace missions. These contributions may relate not only to the role that naval forces play in preventing the inflow of arms contraband into conflict-prone areas, but also the capacity of naval forces to prevent blockades that undermine local economic activity and development.

At a more conceptual level, Brazil's engagement in UNIFIL suggests the need to qualify the concept of rising power. While economic and political constraints do not automatically reverse the 'rising process' altogether, they may considerably dampen spirits and slow down initiatives. Brazil's decision to keep its commitment to UNIFIL in light of growing risks and challenges may be read as an effort to ensure that some of the gains the country made, at least in terms of its role in international security, are not lost with the crisis: it is an example of *rising power maintenance* rather than *rising power projection*. This distinction helps to avoid the excessively uni-directional connotations of terms like 'rising' or 'emerging', without erring on the other extreme, that is, stating that Brazil's rise was mere illusion or an ephemeral phenomenon. The extent to which this maintenance is successful, however, requires further analysis over a longer period.

On Brazil, future research on the topic should seek to parse out the contributions of its participation in UNIFIL thus far, particularly in light of the fast-changing circumstances in Lebanon and in the broader region. The 2011

command handover coincided with a politically sensitive moment in Lebanese politics, when Hezbollah had withdrawn from the Lebanese Government, leading to the fall of Prime Minister Saad al Hariri. Since then, the context has changed in several respects, not only in terms of Lebanese politics but also the regional dynamics. In the Mediterranean, the discovery of gas deposits off the Lebanese and Israeli shorelines has triggered disputes over exploration rights, and these are aggravated by the lack of defined maritime borders between the two countries (as well as with Syria) and no agreement concerning the Exclusive Economic Zone. And meanwhile, the intensification of hostilities in Syria has driven much of the maritime transit from Syrian into Lebanese waters.¹⁰⁰ The analysis should be updated to clarify Brazil's response to these events, both bilaterally and through UNIFIL.

More comparative research is also needed on involvement of rising powers in naval peacebuilding, especially given the common presence of states like Turkey and Brazil in a single mission. Since Turkey is located within the region, its naval contributions (including the use of port facilities) have differed considerably from those made by Brazil. Empirical, comparative research that sheds light on their roles will help to further refine our understanding of rising powers and their behaviour in naval peacekeeping, both in calm and stormy waters.

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